

# WIDE AWAKE.

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## ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

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BY MARY E. WILKINS.  
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DOWN the road to London Town,  
Came a flock of birdies brown,  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
Sweetly singing all the way,  
Under clouds of silver gray,  
A merry flock of birdies brown was it flew to London Town,  
On Christmas Day.

Saddle-bags a-weighing down,  
Rode a man to London Town,  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
Floating locks so golden-gay,  
Cheeks as pink as flowers in May,  
Had the horseman riding down, singing, into London Town,  
On Christmas Day.

Merrily to London Town,  
Danced a troop of children down,  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
Singing sweetly all the way,  
Under clouds of silver gray,  
Horseman, children, birdies brown, sped away to London Town,  
On Christmas Day.

In the streets of London Town,  
Children sang, and birdies brown,  
On Christmas Day, on Christmas Day;  
For the red-cheeked horseman gay  
Scattered toys and crumbs, they say,  
For the birds and children down, in the streets of London Town,  
On Christmas Day.

## A CHRISTMAS BREEZE.

BY SOPHIE MAY.



and boys too, know very well how —

One little heart with anger stirred,  
Two little lips by a naughty word,  
Banish the angel of pearly wing,  
Darksome spirits instead they bring.

"Oh, it's dreadful to have your children act so when you're 'specting company," said Zaidee, shaking her largest doll. "Why, Bluebell, how rude you are! Now, if you go and get the friz out of your hair you sha'n't have any cake for your party."

"My Butterfly is just as bad as your Bluebell, only worse," cried little Jessie Spring. "Sometimes I wish I hadn't any children! And we working so hard to make 'em happy, and give 'em a Christmas party. Zaidee, how long will it be before Christmas?"

Zaidee always knew "how long" it would be before anything, and could actually tell the time on the clock, though she was only seven years old.

"It will be three nights, and two days, and one afternoon," replied she promptly. "Why, Christmas is almost here, and my naughty children haven't made any presents for their mother," went on Zaidee, growing more indignant the more she thought of their base ingratitude.

So she shut up the whole family — there were nine of them — in a large basket which served as a dark closet. Then Jessie found that *her* children never made *her* any presents, and they must go into the wood-box and stay there till they were sorry.

While this severe but just punishment was

going on, the two wise little mothers sat on the rug and fell to talking about Christmas-trees.

"I know one present that will be on our tree, and I wish I didn't know it," said Zaidee, who seemed to look gloomier every minute. "It's a gold bracelet, a splendid beauty. Aunt Fanny bought it last week, because I asked her to; and I promised her I'd forget all about it; but somehow I can't forget. Don't you think it's just awful when you try to forget and can't?"

"Y-e-s. Only some things are awfuller," said Jessie, a little spot in her heart aching with envy. "Some folks don't have any aunties to buy 'em bracelets. I never saw a girl have so many things as you do, Zaidee Selden, never!"

"Well, you needn't be so cross at me for that. I can't help it, Jessie Spring. There now, our children have been in long enough to feel sorry, so we'll take 'em out and pacify 'em. Oh, I'll tell you what my Bluebell wants to do. She has been teasing this ever so long to go up in a balloon; and she *shall* go up; so she shall!"

Upon this, the little girls proceeded to tie their dollies to some toy balloons, and give them a ride in the air.

"Away they go, up in the sky. Isn't it gay? I wish I could go up in a balloon myself," said Jessie, daintily settling the white plume in Butterfly's bonnet.

And perhaps it was at this precise minute that the breeze really began; for Zaidee said very sharply indeed:

"Well, I don't want to go up in a balloon. I shouldn't think anybody'd want to. I should think they'd rather wait till they are dead."

"There, now, Zaidee Selden, you needn't say anything about me being cross. It's *you* are cross! You keep saying, 'No, no,' to everything I say! And it's just because you're so proud about that bracelet!"

"No, it isn't, either," said Zaidee, with dignity. She was subject to little attacks of dignity. "I forgot all about that bracelet. It's the first time I've

forgot it this whole day. I only said I didn't want to go up in the sky; and why *should* I want to go up in the sky, when I'm not dead *at all*?"

As she spoke, she glared at Jessie with her large black eyes in a remarkable way; and Jessie, whose patience had been tried all the afternoon, was moved to say now the most unkind and cutting thing she could think of:

"Well, you needn't go up in the sky, Zaidee Selden. But now I'm going to tell you what my uncle Horace said about your aunt Fanny. Yes, I am. He said she had a *human nose*."

Jessie meant Roman; but it was all the same to Zaidee. A word against her best friend's nose was more than she could bear; and the visit which might have been such a happy one, ended, at last, in a quarrel.

"Why, what has happened!" exclaimed Mrs. Selden, when Zaidee rushed home long before tea-time, looking wildly unhappy.

"O mamma!" replied the little girl, almost sobbing from excitement, "Jessie's very disagreeable; and besides, she knocked me down."

Mrs. Selden looked very much surprised.

"It doesn't seem possible," said she. "I never heard of Jessie's behaving like that. What had you done to make her angry?"

"Oh, it was she that made *me* angry, talking about aunt Fanny's bracelet, and aunt Fanny's *human nose*!"

Mamma let her work fall in her lap, and laughed and laughed.

"A human nose is the very nicest in the world," said she, at last. "But Jessie didn't knock you down for that?"

"No'm;" and Zaidee bowed her head very low in shame. "No'm; I knocked her down first."

Then it was all out. Zaidee had been the one really at fault; and she had known it all the while, though she had tried to make herself believe it was Jessie.

"This is very bad. I am extremely sorry it should have happened," said Mrs. Selden, gazing sadly at her dear, wretched, wayward little daughter. "And to have it happen just as the beautiful Christmas is coming, when everybody ought to be

glad and happy! What kind of a Christmas day is it going to be for my poor little Zaidee?"

"O mamma, I wish I hadn't been naughty! I wish I could take it all back. I haven't acted so since I was a little, little girl!" said the child, throwing herself weeping into her mother's arms. "Can't I ever, ever take it back?"

"Yes; you can ask Jessie to forgive you."

"O mamma, mamma, *mamma*! Jessie was bad herself! If I ask her to forgive me she will think she was good! And, oh, she wasn't good! She was almost half as bad as I!"

Mrs. Selden said no more, but wisely left her little daughter by herself to think.

At supper-time Zaidee's eyes were still pink from weeping; but her face looked serene, and the smiles were playing about her mouth. The truth was, she had written a letter to Jessie. It was very neatly done in violet ink, and she had put in the left-hand corner of the envelope, "Kindness of Zaidee," thinking that was the latest style, though it so happened that the person who took the letter was Nancy, the cook. And Nancy laughed to think Zaidee called herself so kind!

The letter was short:

MY AFFECTIONATE FRIEND:

I am very sorry I nockt you down first. I will forgive you if you will forgive me. Yours respectfully,

Z. S.

This was all Jessie needed to make her happy, for she had the tenderest little heart in the world.

She wrote in reply, "I forgive you." And in the left-hand corner of *her* envelope were the words, "Kindness of Jessie;" for she supposed that must be the proper thing, and she never allowed Zaidee to be more fashionable than herself if she could possibly help it.

And, indeed, there *was* "Kindness" now in the hearts of both little girls, and sincere repentance too for their foolish, bad behavior. "The angel with pearly wing" had come back again: the unhappy little "breeze" had blown over; and in "three nights and two days," Zaidee and Jessie were enjoying the merriest Christmas that ever dawned in "Boston town."

THE PATRONCITO'S CHRISTMAS WITH CHERO-  
KEE SAM.

BY FRANCIS L. STEALEY.



**D**RIVEN downwards by the storm which had raged incessantly for two days about the lofty red ramparts of the Sierra Roja, the black-tail deer, in broken bands, sought refuge in the lower foot hills. Here, also, a light "tracking snow" had fallen, and their trails lay fresh for hunters' following.

Cherokee Sam had been early abroad, long rifle on shoulder, and lank deer hound at heels. Not all for pleasure did the gaunt half-breed slip like a shadow in his hunting moccasins through the cañons clad in pine. Meat was needed in the dirt-roofed cabin in the gulch. And for that matter, bread also, and this, too, despite the fact that the stubble sticking up through the snow in the bottom, marked the site of a harvested corn patch.

The swarthy hunter had indeed planted there; but other hands had gathered the harvest.

Mixed, like his blood, were the half-breed's occupations, and his sinewy hands as often swung the pick and shook the pan, as pointed the rifle. When his company of gold-hunters from the Nacoochee had struck the Sierra, they had scattered through it to prospect for *placer*, and he had then first come upon the gulch, and though it had never panned out even "a color," the charm of its virgin solitude had smitten the half-savage heart of this wanderer after the will-o'-wisp of fortune. Too tangled for trail lay the storm-felled trees, and no man's foot but his own ever trod the gramma grass or brushed the wild cypress bending by the stream. By this, just where the beavers had built their dam, Cherokee Sam had pitched his cabin. Standing by the margin of the silent pool, in close proximity to the uncouth beaver huts, at the first glance its mud-be-daubed exterior might have been taken for the mud palace

of the king beaver himself, but for the thin smoke that slowly melting into air marked the abode of fire-making man. In the rich "bottom" near, the half-breed, with provident mind for "ash-cakes," and "fatty bread," had planted a corn patch, and at evening as he came over the hill above, returning from his day's hunting, and saw the cabin, and the corn greenly waving, he hailed the spot as home.

But one day as he sat idly before his open door, a little gray *burro* came ambling agilely through the fallen trees, his rider, a dwarfish man of haughty aspect, whose cheeks were wrinkled, and beard grizzled, but whose eyes were as piercing and elf-locks as black as the half-breed's own. Seated on his little long-eared palfrey, he accosted the half-breed and gravely inquired, in tolerable English, if he knew that he was trespassing on the lands of the *patron*, who lived at the plaza, on the plain below.

"No; I don't know nothing about no *patron*," said Cherokee Sam shortly, as he arose and stood towering in giant height above the dwarfish rider of the *burro*.

*Bien*, then he was sorry to have to tell him, said the Spanish stranger in suave reply. He was the *mayordomo*, and this was the *patron's* land, and the coyote (half-breed) that killed all the deer must seek some other spot. Far he must go, too, for the *patron's* land was far-reaching, and he pointed with his willow wand to the Sierra rising above, and the plain rolling far away below. On all sides far as the eye could see was the *patron's* land. His it was by virtue of a Spanish grant.

The coyote giant laughed in scorn. "I've heerd of them thar grants. What good are they? Squatters' rights and squatters' rifles rules in this here free country, I reckon. Go back, little Mr. Mexican, to your *patron*, and tell him that here I've took up my homestead, and here I'll stay, and you uns may do your do!"

As he spoke he threw his rifle on his hollowed

arm, and looked black thunder from his beetling brow upon the burro-rider. Perhaps had he been less haughty in his defiance, he would have fared better at the *mayordomo's* hands. For when the corn was yellow, and he returned from one of his periodical prospects to gather it, he found only the bare stubble field awaiting him.

Thus it was that Cherokee Sam, hunter, prospector and squatter, despite his triad of trades, was now at Christmas without a "corn-pone," and this state was likely to continue through the winter.

Returning home at sunset with the legs of a doe tied across his breast, and her slender head, with its big ears trailing behind against the muzzle of the eager hound, the hunter strode from the timber on the slope, and struck the snow from his frozen leggins and moccasins as he paused on the Shut-in. A lofty upheaved ledge of red sandstone was this, which arose from the slopes on either hand, and shut in the gulch from the plain below, leaving only a narrow portal for the passage of the stream.

Above him, as he stood, were the foot-hills, and his wild home all snow-covered and cold in the shadow of the Sierra. But below the snow had not fallen, and the plain shone brown and warm in the lingering light of the setting sun. There, softened by the distance, with a saffron shimmer about its dark outlines, lay the gray *adobe* plaza, sleeping by the silver stream.

There were gathered corn and oil, the fat of the land; and he would have nothing but the deer on his shoulders for Christmas cheer. A bad gleam came in the half-breed's eyes as he thought of his harried corn-patch, and gazed at the abode of his enemy.

As if in sympathy with his master, the hound put up his bristles, and growled savagely. Looking down, the hunter was astonished to see a small figure standing motionless at the foot of the Shut-in, and gazing up at him.

The stranger was a young boy. He was very richly and somewhat fantastically dressed in a silken jacket, and silken *pantalones*, much be-but-toned about the outer seams, and confined at the waist by a silken sash. On his feet were buckskin *zapatitos*, soled with raw-hide, and tied with draw-strings of ribbon, and over his long and flowing hair a white sombrero with gay silk tassels.

This he reverentially removed as the hunter de-

scented, and resting on him his soft black eyes, said:

"Good evening, Señor don San Nicolas. To-night is *Noche Buena* (Christmas eve), and Padre Luis told me you would pass through the Shut-in on your way to the plaza. So I've come to meet you."

His manner was eager and full of trustful confidence. The half-breed was taken aback.

"I don't go by no such name as that," he replied gruffly. "I'm Cherokee Sam, and I live down thar;" and he pointed to the dirt-roofed cabin in the gulch.

"I wanted badly to see the saint," said the stranger, as his face fell; "and I never could when he comes to the plaza, because I'm then always asleep. I'm the *patroncito*, señor."

He had replaced his sombrero, and his air as he declared himself was princely.

Cherokee Sam's face darkened. The young *patron* — the son of his enemy — the despoiler of the corn-patch. Even now they must be seeking him, and here he was in his hands. And there was no snow below, and they could find no trail to follow.

"What did you do that for?" asked the *patroncito*, in a tone of authority, as he laid his hand on the ragged bullet-hole behind the doe's shoulder.

"I had to have meat for my Christmas dinner," said Sam. "Come with me, and I will show you that thar Spanish Santy Claus you're huntin' for," he added, and held out his hand.

The *patroncito* placed his own in it promptly. For a moment the giant stayed his stride to the other's puny steps. Then the *patroncito* stopped and said commandingly:

"The snow is deep; take me up!"

Never had the wild hunter known a master; but now, without a word, he stooped and, like another giant St Christopher, set the child upon his shoulder, and plunged through the drifts for the cabin.

In a moment he had the doe gambrelled to a pine in front of the cabin. Then he pushed open the slab door, and entering, blew up the covered embers in the rough fireplace, and piled on the pitch pine. As it blazed up, he drew a couple of deerskins from his bed in the corner and flung them down before the fire and bade the *patroncito* be seated.





THE BOY REVERENTIALLY REMOVED HIS SOMBRERO.

He obeyed; and the half-breed looked at him with stern satisfaction. Many a long day should it be ere the *patron* saw again his son and heir. But these reflections were disturbed. His guest pointed to his gay *zapatos*.

"Will you please take them off, Don Cherokee Sam?" he said. "My feet are wet and my fingers are numb."

The half-breed knelt and undid the ribbons, and drew them off, and also his long silk stockings.

"*Muchas gracias, Don,*" said the *patroncito*, as he reclined at ease and toasted his bare toes before the fire.

His fearlessness pleased his hunter host well. His manner, too, was patronizing, and the half-breed entered into the jest with savage humor.

"If you'll 'scuse me, Mister *Patroncito*, I'll git supper."

He spoke as if this were an operation requiring great culinary skill and much previous preparation. It consisted in cutting three steaks, with his sheath-knife, from the deer's ham, and placing them with a lump of fat in the frying-pan over the fire. These turned and browned, two tin cups filled with water, and the supper was ready.

The guest took kindly enough to the venison. He tasted the water and paused. "I'll thank you for a cup of hot coffee, Don Cherokee Sam, with plenty of sugar in it, if you please."

Don Cherokee Sam was embarrassed at this polite but luxurious request.

"Coffee's bad," he said, shaking his head. "It spiles my nerve so 's I can't draw a stiddy bead. Water 's best, *patroncito*."

The guest was truly polite. He emptied his cup with the best of grace. But presently he paused again in his consumption of venison.

"Pardon me, but you have forgotten the bread."

The host arose. What could he set before this youthful sybarite from the plaza?

"Bread 's been mighty scarce with me this winter," he muttered. "And I planted a good plenty of corn out thar too."

The recollection roused his rankling resentment, and he paused.

"Why didn't you gather it, then, like the *peones* do?" asked the *patroncito* placidly.

"It was stole," muttered the host; but he checked himself, and added in a softer tone, "by b'ars and other varmints, I reckon."

And with this compromise between anger and truth, Cherokee Sam reached up and took down a small sack hanging to the great centre roof-log. It contained a few nubbins found on the harried field, his seed for next spring.

"*Patroncito*," he remarked in a tone of conciliating confidence, as he shelled an ear in the frying-pan, "thar's nothing like deer meat, and running water, and the free air of heaven, and maybe parched corn oncet in a while, to make a man a man."

Under this encomium the parched corn was partaken of with gravity. And supper being over, the host cleaned up, a simple process, performed by dashing cold water in the red-hot frying-pan, and hanging it on a nail.

"San Nicolas, you said you'd show him to me," then politely hinted the *patroncito*.

"It's early yet for him," said Cherokee Sam. "He's jist about taking the trail in the Sierra, and the drifts is mighty deep, too. But he'll be here."

"My stockings, Don—they should be ready; and they're wet. Will you oblige me by holding them to the fire?" said the princely *patroncito*.

Cherokee Sam held the damp stockings to the blaze. The *patroncito* watched him sleepily.

"He's a long time coming, Don Cherokee Sam," he murmured, as he nodded—nodded yet again, and slipped down upon the deerskin, fast asleep.

The half-breed lifted him like a feather, and laid him on his bed and drew the covering softly over him. Noiselessly he replenished the fire, and squatted before it, resuming the stocking-drying process.

The resinous boughs burst into flame, and a pungent perfume and a red glow pervaded the smoke-blackened cabin. The light fell on the *patroncito* as he lay on the couch of skins, caressed the slender foot he had thrust from out the covering, and danced on the silver buttons strung on his gay *pantalones*. Over him, like an ogre, hovered the wavering shadow of the giant's head, rendered more grotesque by his towering cap of badger-skin, plumed with a flaunting tail.

As he sat on his heels in the brilliant light, this savage head-covering lent additional fierceness to the half-breed's hatchet-face. Wild-eyed, too, was he as any denizen of his chosen haunts. But stolid in its composure as his saturnine countenance was, it was free from all trace of the petty



passions that cramp the souls of his civilized half-brothers. And as he looked at the soft stockings, now dry in his hands, a smile parted his thin lips.

Just then the firelight flared up and went suddenly out, and the threatening shadow on the wall was lost. And though the door never opened, and even the hunter's vigilant ears caught no sound, he felt a presence in the cabin. Looking up, he dreamily beheld, shadowed forth dimly in the gloom, the form of San Nicolas, long belated by the drifts. But how that Spanish Christmas saint looked, or what he said to remind the half-breed of that hallowed time when all should be peace on earth and good will towards men, must ever remain a secret between him and his lawless host.

The *patroncito* awoke, and through the open doorway saw the snow sparkling in the sun of Christmas morning. Over the fire Cherokee Sam was frying venison, and on either side hung the long silk stockings, filled.

"And I never saw him!" said the *patroncito* reproachfully, as he looked at them. "Oh, why didn't you wake me, Don Cherokee Sam?"

"I didn't dar to do it, *patroncito*," explained Sam. "'Twasn't safe when he told me not to."

He watched the *patroncito* anxiously as he took the stockings down. But he need have had no fear. As their contents rolled out on the deerskin the *patroncito* uttered a cry of delight.

A handful of garnets, bits of broken agate, a shivered topaz, shining cubes of iron pyrites, picked up on otherwise fruitless prospects by San Nicolas; a tanned white weasel-skin purse, and ornaments of young bucks' prongs, patiently carved by that good saint on winter evenings. Certainly, never before, with all his silk and silver, had the

petted *patroncito* received gifts so prized as these.

"Never mind about breakfast," he said imperiously, as he gathered them up. "Take me to the plaza right away."

The half-breed humbly complied. But scarcely had they emerged from the granite gateway of the Shut-in when they were met by a party from the plaza, headed by the *patron* himself, searching, in great trouble, for the wanderer. They had been abroad all night. Happily, Cherokee Sam remembered the admonitions of San Nicolas over night.

"*Patron*," he said, haughtily, as he led the *patroncito* forward, "I bring you a Christmas gift."

Then, as Cherokee Sam afterwards described it, "there was a jabbering and a waving of hands by them thar Mexicans." And he, turning, strode back to his cabin, and his unfinished breakfast. Still his resentment rankled. But it vanished later on that day.

Once more the gray *burro* ambled up the gulch, bearing the dwarfish *mayordomo*, but this time on a mission of peace. After him came a *burrada* (pack-train) well laden, and drew up before the door of the astonished Cherokee Sam. With uncovered head and courtesy profound, the *mayordomo* stood before him and asked would Don Cherokee Sam indicate where he would have the Christmas gifts, sent by the *patroncito*, stored.

"In the cabin," replied Sam, glancing at the loaded *burros* in dismay, "if it will hold 'em. I ain't got nowhars else."

The *mayordomo* waved his wand to the attendant packers, and in a moment the cabin was filled with box, bag, and bale, closely piled. Assuredly Don Cherokee Sam had luxuries of life to last until Christmas came again.

CHILDREN, get your garlands O!  
Lustily the north wind's blowing;  
Soon, you know, 'twill cease to snow,  
Amber in the west is glowing.

Children, come! The air is full  
Of those six-leaved, crystal lilies;  
(Haste, your evergreens to pull!)  
Stemless stars and amaryllis.

Deeper in the woodland hie,  
Like a flock of robins calling!  
Surely, dears, you need not fly  
From a shower of blossoms falling.

Heyday, children, carol O!  
Seeking glossy leaf and berry  
In a lightsome whirl o' snow,  
Makes a Christmas merry, merry!

## SONG OF A CHRISTMAS HEARTH.

BY MARGARET SIDNEY.



HE wind sighed thro' the casement low,  
 It dared no more ;  
 The whirling snow just peeped  
     beneath  
 That old green door ;  
 Two little twinkling lights illumed  
 The mantel quaint  
 With fitful gleams that played adown  
 The dingy paint.

Betwixt the andirons grim and tall,  
     The fire had died ;  
 Tired of watching for visitor  
     At Christmas-tide  
 Who never came ; so sleepily,  
     It crooned "good-night,"  
 And shadows crept across the floor  
     And ceiling white.

From chimney corner's dim recess,  
     In the thick gloom,  
 A sweet voice sounded clearly thro'  
     The dull old room :  
 " Brother," it said, "'tis Christmas-tide,  
     It bringeth cheer,  
 And love, good will, and peace to all,  
     Are now and here

" The Christ-child's gifts to every one.  
     Dear heart, rejoice ;  
 Come, let us sing our carol now,  
     With thankful voice."  
 But the boy turned away, and sighed,  
     " I cannot sing,  
 When life is dreary, and denies  
     Us everything."

In nook of fireplace dark and old,  
     Warming his back,  
 A cricket sat where he had crept  
     Out of his crack.

He heard sweet Ethel's soft refrain,  
     And shook his head.  
 " The boy is right, and Life *is* dark,  
     And Hope is dead."

" O brother," still the glad, sweet voice  
     Repeated clear,  
 " Give me your hand ; now sing with me :  
     ' The Lord is here,  
 He bringeth peace, good will to man' —  
     Sing, Brother, sing,  
 Ere twelve shall strike in belfry clock,  
     The bells to ring."

The boy sprang to his feet. " Forgive  
     Me, Lord," he cried,  
 " That I should so forget Thy love  
     At Christmas-tide.  
 Come, Ethel, we will surely sing  
     Our Christmas hymn."  
 Then, clasping hands, they carolled forth  
     In firelight dim :

" *The Lord is here*" — a Christmas bell  
     In belfry bold,  
 Caught sweet refrain from chimney-top  
     So quaint and old.  
 " *Is here — is here ; he bringeth peace,  
     Good will to all —  
 To us he bringeth peace*" — the bell  
     Let echo fall,

And passed it on, till all the air  
 Was jangle sweet,  
 Breathing one dear thought, clear and strong,  
 In rhythm complete.  
 Hush! from amid the whirling sleet  
 And blinding storm  
 A radiant presence seemed to stand  
 In childish form,

And voice of heavenly sweetness pierced  
 The bitter gloom  
 Of wintry chill and lurking shade  
 In quaint old room.  
 "Who loveth me, and trusteth, when  
 He cannot see,  
 Shall always have the Christmas joy  
 In verity."

Ah! then they knew the Christ-child dear,  
 In very deed  
 Had paused at their poor, lonely door,  
 Their song to heed.  
 A sudden radiance filled the room.  
 From crooning rest  
 The fire leaped forth; the cricket chirped,  
 The happy hearth-stone rang with joy,  
 At loving benediction given  
 By Heavenly Guest.

## A DOUBLE MASQUERADE.

(*A Romance of the Revolution.*)

BY REV. CHARLES R. TALBOT.

### CHAPTER I.

#### AT THE SIGN OF THE GOLDEN BALL.



UPON the road between Worcester and Boston, and not many miles from the latter town, there stood, in the year 1775, an old-fashioned tavern whose sign was a huge yellow ball. Before this tavern, about three

o'clock of a pleasant day in early June-time of the year just named, two travellers drew rein. They were mere lads, not above sixteen years of age at the most, and of an appearance quite unusual in that part of the country.

The foremost was a bright-looking, handsome young fellow, well-dressed and well-furnished, mounted upon a valuable black horse, and sitting

in his saddle as though he had been born there. There was about his whole make-up an air of rank and importance which did not fail to extend itself to his manner, though this to an amusing and interesting rather than offensive degree. The other of the two seemed not so much a companion of the first as a part of his belongings. He was dressed in a suit of smart livery, and was evidently a servant — a stout negro lad with a grave, comical face that, though black as midnight, shone like the noonday sun beneath his velvet hunting cap.

Dame Hannah Holcomb, mistress of the Golden Ball, had come out upon the porch after dinner to bask awhile in the afternoon sun, and had fallen asleep over her copy of the *Massachusetts Spy* — a seditious little sheet published every Thursday morning in the town of Worcester, and for whose rebel utterances the good dame cherished in her heart the profoundest contempt. Dame Holcomb was a fat, jolly looking woman, clad in a striped





LITTLE BRIDGET LIVED IT OVER, SMELT AGAIN THE SWEET, RED CLOVER.

## LITTLE BRIDGET'S CHRISTMAS FLOWERS.

BY LUCY LARCOM.

THROUGH the bleak December day  
 Little pale-faced Bridget lay  
 On her shabby trundle bed,  
 Covered with a threadbare spread.

Down the dim and dingy wall  
 Scarce a sunbeam crept at all.  
 Or if one astray did come,  
 Never seemed it quite at home.

Little Bridget lay alone,  
 Trying not to cry or moan  
 For her mother, who must stay  
 Out at work the livelong day.

No one by her bedside sat:  
 Rusty stove and ragged mat,  
 Chair and table, window, door,  
 Her companions; nothing more.



Poor the room was, poor and plain ;  
But the narrow window-pane  
Let her out into free air,  
Into landscapes wide and fair.

Out beyond the dreary street  
Sped her fancy's flying feet,  
Over hillside, meadow, dell —  
Ah ! she knew it all so well !

Once, when summer days were long,  
Once, when she was brisk and strong,  
Kind hands bore her far away  
Into the green fields to play.

Oh, the happy Country Week,  
When the children went to seek  
Flowers and sunshine on the hills,  
Far away from city ills !

Little Bridget lived it over —  
Smelt again the sweet, red clover,  
Watched the bright-eyed squirrels gray,  
Fed the birds, and tossed the hay.

All the beautiful wild flowers  
Came to cheer her lonesome hours ;  
Smiling, one by one, they came,  
Blossoms she had learned by name.

Hardhack, with its pale, pink spire ;  
Cardinals, clothed in crimson fire ;  
Golden daisies, through the bars  
Shining up at her, like stars.

Once more on the river's breast  
Large white lilies swayed in rest ;  
Waved for her the meadows sweet ;  
Pussy-clover brushed her feet.

Once again her footsteps turn  
Towards the woodlands, fresh with fern,  
Up the hill, and down the lane —  
'Twas the Country Week again.

Little Bridget's eyes were bright  
When her mother came at night :  
"Thoughts have wings," she said, "and I  
With them through the window fly.

"I forget the cold," she said,  
"I forget my aching head,  
While I wander long, long hours,  
As I used to, gathering flowers."

Brighter little Bridget's eyes  
Shone with wonder and surprise,  
Gazing on her window-pane  
When the morning dawned again.

Who had been there in the night  
Tracing, all in outlines white,  
Blossoms, ferns, and feathery grass,  
On her little square of glass ?

Nodding harebells, daisy stars,  
Pine-clad cliffs, and even the bars  
That she used to clamber through,  
Into fields where lilies grew ?

Down the chill, gray dawning fell  
Echoes of a Christmas bell.  
Little Bridget scarce could speak,  
But a flush suffused her cheek.

And her heart with joy grew faint : —  
"Mother, did the angels paint  
Flowers and ferns I used to see  
For a Christmas gift to me ?

"Something more than flowers they seem :  
Mine in many a hungry dream,  
Things like these have been ; they grow  
In the fields of heaven, I know.

"In my dreams they bloom, so fair !  
And the little children there  
With me wondrous blossoms seek :  
Heaven is like the Country Week !"

Happy Bridget ! more than health,  
More than luxury or wealth —  
Hers the blessed gift to find  
Beauty, where the world is blind.

And her angel-guides they were,  
Who in summer went with her,  
Beauty's secret to explore  
One glad week, by hill and shore.

Heaven's great gates are open here ;  
 Angels far and angels near  
 Toward the little children lean,  
 Winning them to pastures green.

And no grand cathedral shows  
 Windows half so fine as those  
 Little Bridget gazed upon  
 In the cold, white Christmas dawn.

For the heavenly artists brought  
 Their own seeing to her thought ;  
 Taught her from her heart to paint ;  
 Little Bridget, baby saint !

## THE PATCHWORK SCHOOL.

BY MARY E. WILKINS.



ONCE upon a time there was a city which possessed a very celebrated institution for the reformation of unruly children. It was, strictly speaking, a Reform School, but of a very peculiar kind.

It had been established years before by a benevolent lady, who had a great deal of money and wished to do good with it. After thinking a long time, she had hit upon this plan of founding a school for the improvement of children who tried their parents and all their friends by their ill behavior. More especially was it designed for ungrateful and discontented children ; indeed it was mainly composed of this last class.

There was a special set of police in the city, whose whole duty was to keep a sharp lookout for ill-natured, fretting children, who complained of their parents' treatment, and thought other boys and girls were much better off than they, and to march them away to the school. These police all wore white top boots, tall peaked hats, and carried sticks with blue ribbon bows on them, and were very readily distinguished. Many a little boy on his way to school has dodged round a corner to avoid one, because he had just been telling

his mother that another little boy's mother gave him twice as much pie for dinner as he had. He wouldn't breathe easy till he had left the white top boots out of sight ; and he would tremble all day at every knock on the door.

There was not a child in the city but had a great horror of this School, though it may seem rather strange that they should ; for the punishment, at first thought, did not seem so very terrible. Ever since it was established, the school had been in charge of a very singular little old woman. Nobody had ever known where she came from. The benevolent lady who founded the institution, had brought her to the door one morning in her coach, and the neighbors had seen the little brown, wizened creature, with a most extraordinary gown on, alight and enter. This was all any one had ever known about her. In fact, the benevolent lady had come upon her in the course of her travels in a little German town, sitting in a garret window, behind a little box-garden of violets, sewing patchwork. After that, she became acquainted with her, and finally hired her to superintend her school. You see, the benevolent lady had a very tender heart, and though she wanted to reform the naughty children of her native city, and have them grow up to be good men and women, she did not want them to be shaken, nor have their ears cuffed ; so the ideas advanced by the strange little old woman just suited her.

"Set 'em to sewing patchwork," said this little

old woman, sewing patchwork vigorously herself as she spoke. She was dressed in a gown of bright-colored patchwork, with a patchwork shawl over her shoulders. Her cap was made of tiny squares of patchwork, too. "If they are sewing patchwork," went on the little old woman, "they can't be in mischief. Just make 'em sit in little chairs and sew patchwork, boys and girls alike. Make 'em sit and saw patchwork, when the bees are flying over the clover, out in the bright sunlight, and the great blue-winged butterflies stop with the roses just outside the windows, and the robins are singing in the cherry-trees, and they'll turn over a new leaf, you'll see!"

So the school was founded, the strange little old woman placed over it, and it really worked admirably. It was the pride of the city. Strangers who visited it were always taken to visit the Patchwork School, for that was the name it went by. There sat the children, in their little chairs, sewing patchwork. They were dressed in little patchwork uniforms; the girls wore blue and white patchwork frocks and pink and white patchwork pinafores, and the boys blue and white patchwork trousers, with pinafores like the girls. Their cheeks were round and rosy, for they had plenty to eat—bread and milk three times a day—but they looked sad, and tears were standing in the corners of a good many eyes. How could they help it? It did seem as if the loveliest roses in the whole country were blossoming in the garden of the Patchwork School, and there were swarms of humming-birds flying over them, and great red and blue-winged butterflies. And there were tall cherry-trees a little way from the window, and they used to be perfectly crimson with fruit; and the way the robins would sing in them! Later in the season there were apple and peach trees, too, the apples and great rosy peaches fairly dragging the branches to the ground, and all in sight from the window of the schoolroom.

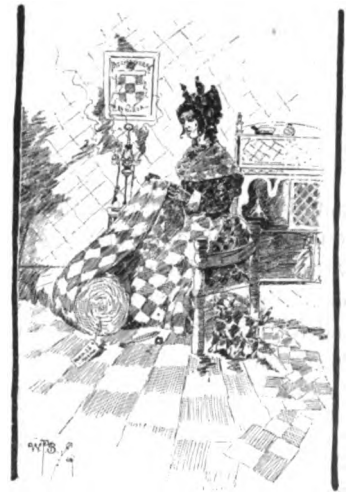
No wonder the poor little culprits cooped up in doors sewing red and blue and green pieces of calico together, looked sad. Every day bales of calico were left at the door of the Patchwork School, and it all had to be cut up in little bits and sewed together again. When the children heard the heavy tread of the porters bringing in the bales of new calico, the tears would leave the corners of their eyes and trickle down their poor

little cheeks, at the prospect of the additional work they would have to do. All the patchwork had to be sewed over and over, and every crooked or too long stitch had to be picked out; for the Patchwork Woman was very particular. They had to make all their own clothes of patchwork, and after those were done, patchwork bed quilts, which were given to the city poor; so the benevolent lady killed two birds with one stone, as you might say.

Of course, children staid in the Patchwork School different lengths of time, according to their different offences. But there were very few children in the city who had not sat in a little chair and sewed patchwork, at one time or another, for a greater or less period. Sooner or later, the best children were sure to think they were ill treated by their parents, and had to go to bed earlier than they ought, or did not have as much candy as other children; and the police would hear them grumbling, and drag them off to the Patchwork School. The Mayor's son, especially, who might be supposed to fare as well as any little boy in the city, had been in the school any number of times.

There was one little boy in the city, however, whom the white-booted police had not yet found any occasion to arrest, though one might have thought he had more reason than a good many others to complain of his lot in life. In the first place, he had a girl's name, and any one knows that would be a great cross to a boy. His name was Julia; his parents had called him so on account of his having a maiden aunt who had promised to leave her money to him if he was named for her.

So there was no help for it, but it was a great trial to him, for the other boys plagued him unmercifully, and called him "missy," and "sissy," and said "she" instead of "he" when they were speaking of him. Still he never com-



THE PATCHWORK WOMAN.



plained to his parents, and told them he wished they had called him some other name. His parents were very poor, hard-working people, and Julia had much coarser clothes than the other boys, and plainer food, but he was always cheerful about

with their knitting work, in Julia's home. They were nice old ladies, and Julia loved them dearly, but they lost their spectacles all the time, and were always dropping their balls of yarn, and it did make a deal of work for one boy to do. He could have hunted up spectacles for one Grandmother, but when it came to four, and one was always losing hers while he was finding another's, and one ball of yarn would drop and roll off, while he was picking up another — well, it was really bewildering at times. Then he had to hold the skeins of yarn for them to wind, and his arms used to ache, and he could hear the boys shouting at a game of ball outdoors, maybe. But he never refused to do anything his Grandmothers asked him to, and did it pleasantly too; and it was not on that account he got into the Patchwork School.

It was on Christmas Day that Julia was arrested and led away to the Patchwork School. It happened in this way: As I said before, Julia's parents were poor, and it was all they could do to procure the bare comforts of life for their family; there was very little to spend for knickknacks. But I don't think Julia would have complained at that; he would have liked useful articles just as well for Christmas presents, and would not have been unhappy because he did not find some useless toy in his stocking, instead of some article of clothing, which he needed to make him comfortable.

But he had had the same things over and over, over and over, Christmas after Christmas. Every year each of his Grandmothers knit him two pairs of blue woollen yarn stockings, and hung them for him on Christmas eve, for a Christmas present. There they would hang — eight pairs of stockings with nothing in them, in a row on the mantel shelf, every Christmas morning.

Every year Julia thought about it for weeks before Christmas, and hoped and hoped he would have something different this time, but there they always hung, and he had to go and kiss his Grandmothers, and pretend he liked the stockings the best of anything he could have had; for he would not have hurt their feelings for the world.

His parents might have bettered matters a little, but they did not wish to cross the old ladies either, and they had to buy so much yarn they could not afford to get anything else.

The worst of it was, the stockings were knit so well, and of such stout material, that they never



JULIA WAS ARRESTED ON CHRISTMAS DAY.

it, and never seemed to think it at all hard that he could not have a velvet coat like the Mayor's son, or carry cakes for lunch to school like the lawyer's little boy. But perhaps the greatest cross which Julia had to bear, and the one from which he stood in the greatest danger of getting into the Patchwork School, was his Grandmothers. I don't mean to say that grandmothers are to be considered usually as crosses. A dear old lady seated with her knitting beside the fire, is a pleasant person to have in the house. But Julia had four, and he had to hunt for their spectacles, and pick up their balls of yarn so much that he got very little time to play. It was an unusual thing, but the families on both sides were very long-lived, and there actually were four grandmothers; two great ones, and two common ones; two on each side of the fireplace,



wore out, so Julia never really needed the new ones; if he had, that might have reconciled him to the sameness of his Christmas presents, for he was a very sensible boy. But his bureau drawers were full of the blue stockings rolled up in neat little hard balls—all the balls he ever had; the tears used to spring up in his eyes every time he looked at them. But he never said a word till the Christmas when he was twelve years old. Somehow that time he was unusually cast down at the sight of the eight pairs of stockings hanging in a row under the mantel shelf; but he kissed and thanked his Grandmothers just as he always had.

When he was out on the street a little later, however, he sat down in a doorway and cried. He could not help it. Some of the other boys had such lovely presents, and he had nothing but these same blue woollen stockings.

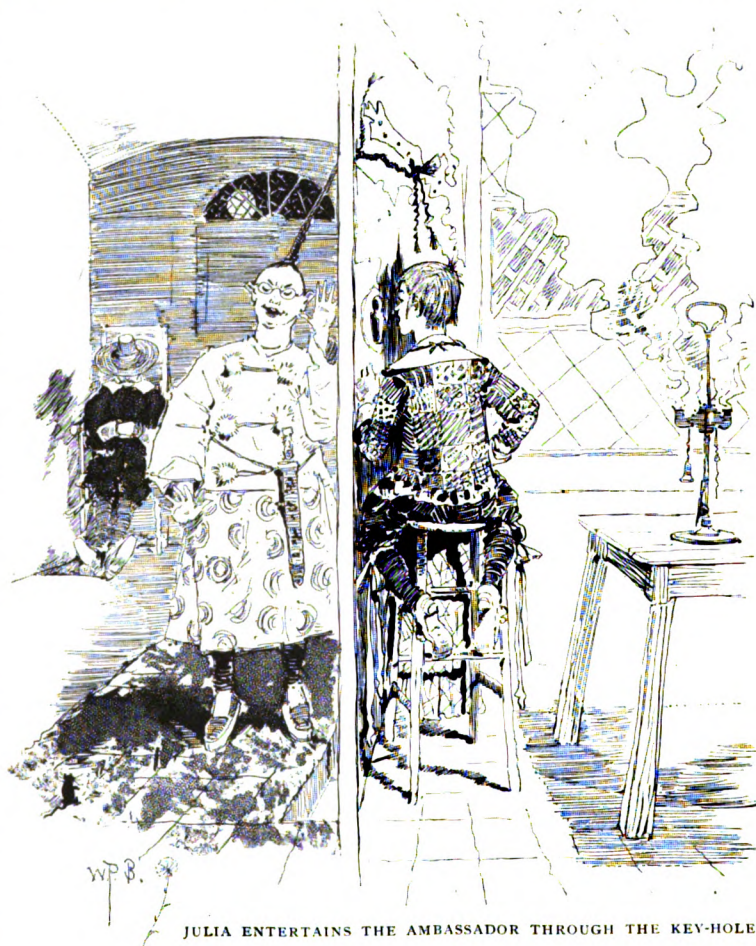
"What's the matter, little boy?" asked a voice.

Without looking up, Julia sobbed out his trouble; but what was his horror when he felt himself seized by the arm and lifted up, and found that he was in the grasp of a policeman in white top boots. The policeman did not mind Julia's tears and entreaties in the least, but led him away to the Patchwork School, waving his stick with its blue ribbon bow as majestically as a drum major.

So Julia had to sit down in a little chair, and sew patchwork with the rest. He did not mind the close work as much as some of the others, for he was used to being kept in doors, attending to his Grandmothers' wants; but he disliked to sew. His term of punishment was a long one. The Patchwork Woman, who fixed it, thought it looked very badly for a little boy to be complaining because his kind grandparents had given him some warm stockings instead of foolish toys.

The first thing the children had to do when they entered the school, was to make their patchwork clothes, as I have said. Julia had got his finished and was busily sewing on a red and green patchwork quilt, in a tea-chest pattern, when, one day, the Mayor came to visit the school. Just then his son did not happen to be serving a term there; the Mayor never visited it with visitors of distinction when he was.

To-day he had a Chinese Ambassador with him. The Patchwork Woman sat behind her desk on the



JULIA ENTERTAINS THE AMBASSADOR THROUGH THE KEY-HOLE.

platform and sewed patchwork, the Mayor in his fine broadcloth sat one side of her, and the Chinese Ambassador, in his yellow satin gown, on the other.

The Ambassador's name was To-Chum. The children could not help stealing glances occasionally at his high eyebrows and braided queue, but they cast their eyes on their sewing again directly.



The Mayor and the Ambassador staid about an hour; then after they had both made some remarks—the Ambassador made his in Chinese;

Now the Mayor and the Chinese Ambassador had staid rather longer then they should have. They had been so interested in the school that



THE GRANDMOTHERS ENJOY THE CHINESE TOYS.

they had not noticed how the time was going, and the Patchwork Woman had been so taken up with a very intricate new pattern that she failed to remind them, as was her custom.

So it happened that while the Mayor got through the iron door safely, just as the Chinese Ambassador was following it suddenly swung to, and shut in his braided queue at a very high point.

he could speak English, but his remarks in Chinese were wiser—they rose to go.

Now, the door of the Patchwork School was of a very peculiar structure. It was made of iron of a great thickness, and opened like any safe door, only it had more magic about it than any safe door ever had. At a certain hour in the afternoon, it shut of

Then there was the Ambassador on one side of the door, and his queue on the other, and the door could not possibly be opened before morning. Here was a terrible dilemma! What was to be done? There stood the children, their patchwork in their hands, staring, open-mouthed, at the queue dangling through the door, and the Patchwork Woman pale with dismay, in their midst, on one side of the door, and on the other side was the terror-stricken Mayor, and the poor Chinese Ambassador.

"Can't anything be done?" shouted the Mayor through the keyhole—there was a very large keyhole.

"No," the Patchwork Woman said. "The door *won't* open till six o'clock to-morrow morning."

"Oh, try!" groaned the Mayor. "Say the formula."

She said the formula, to satisfy them, but the door staid firmly shut. Evidently the Chinese Ambassador would have to stay where he was until morning, unless he had the Mayor snip his queue off, which was not to be thought of.

So the Mayor, who was something of a philosopher, set about accommodating himself, or rather his friend, to the situation.

"It is inevitable," said he to the Ambassador. "I am very sorry, but everybody has to conform to

its own accord, and opened at a certain hour in the morning, when the Patchwork Woman repeated a formula before it. The formula did no good whatever at any other time; the door was so constructed that not even its inventor could open it after it shut at the certain hour of the afternoon, before the certain hour the next morning.

the customs of the institutions of the countries which they visit. I will go and get you some dinner, and an extra coat. I will keep you company through the night, and morning will come before you know it."

"Well," sighed the Chinese Ambassador, standing on tiptoe so his queue should not pull so hard. He was a patient man, but after he had eaten his dinner the time seemed terribly long.

"Why don't you talk?" said he to the Mayor, who was dozing beside him in an easy-chair. "Can't you tell me a story?"

"I never did such a thing in my life," replied the Mayor, rousing himself; "but I am very sorry for you, dear sir, and perhaps the Patchwork Woman can."

So he asked the Patchwork Woman through the keyhole.

"I never told a story in my life," said she; "but there's a boy here that I heard telling a beautiful one the other day. Here, Julia," called she, "come and tell a story to the Chinese Ambassador."

Julia really knew a great many stories which his Grandmothers had taught him, and he sat on a little stool and told them through the keyhole all night to the Chinese Ambassador.

He and the Mayor were so interested that morning came and the door swung open before they knew it. The poor Ambassador drew a long breath, and put his hand around to his queue to see if it was safe. Then he wanted to thank and reward the boy who had made the long night hours pass so pleasantly.

"What is he in here for?" asked the Mayor, patting Julia, who could hardly keep his eyes open.

"He grumbled about his Christmas presents," replied the Patchwork Woman.

"What did you have?" inquired the Mayor.

"Eight pairs of blue yarn stockings," answered Julia, rubbing his eyes.

"And the year before?"

"Eight pairs of blue yarn stockings."

"And the year before that?"

"Eight pairs of blue yarn stockings."

"Didn't you ever have anything for Christmas

presents but blue yarn stockings?" asked the astonished Mayor.

"No, sir," said Julia meekly.

Then the whole story came out. Julia, by dint of questioning, told some, and the other children told the rest; and finally, in the afternoon, orders came to dress him in his own clothes, and send him home. But when he got there, the Mayor and Chinese Ambassador had been there before him, and there hung the eight pairs of blue yarn stockings under the mantel-shelf, crammed full of the most beautiful things — knives, balls, candy — everything he had ever wanted, and the mantel-shelf piled high also.

A great many of the presents were of Chinese manufacture; for the Ambassador considered them, of course, superior, and he wished to express his gratitude to Julia as forcibly as he could. There was one stocking entirely filled with curious Chinese tops. A little round head, so much like the Ambassador's that it actually startled Julia, peeped out of the stocking. But it was only a top in the shape of a little man in a yellow silk gown, who could spin around very successfully on one foot, for an astonishing length of time. There was a Chinese lady-top too, who fanned herself coquettishly as she spun; and a mandarin who nodded wisely. The tops were enough to turn a boy's head.

There were equally curious things in the other stockings. Some of them Julia had no use for, such as silk for dresses, China crape shawls and fans, but they were just the things for his Grandmothers, who, after this, sat beside the fireplace, very prim and fine, in stiff silk gowns, with China crape shawls over their shoulders, and Chinese fans in their hands, and queer shoes on their feet. Julia liked their presents just as well as he did his own, and probably the Ambassador knew that he would.

The Mayor had filled one stocking himself with bon-bons, and Julia picked out all the peppermints amongst them for his Grandmothers. They were very fond of peppermints. Then he went to work to find their spectacles, which had been lost ever since he had been away.



## THE WONDERFUL CHRISTMAS BOX.

By G. B. BARTLETT.



NOWING the need, we are sure this novelty will be found useful at all private and public holiday parties, the managers of which are tired of the worn-out methods of amusing both old and young. It will seem surprising to the spectators, but will be

found less trouble in its preparation than most of the ancient ways of distributing Christmas presents.

When the children are admitted into the hall, vestry, or parlor, they see on the platform, or at one end of the room, a long table, covered to the ground with a red or white cloth brilliantly lighted with candles at the corners. After an opening song, or piano music, a gentleman enters, bearing under his arm a thin box about three feet in length by two feet in width, and six inches in height. This he places upon the table; and after standing it carelessly on its edge, lays it down with the front side towards the audience. The cover is tightly fastened with a common brass hook in the front edge, and has hinges at the back. A little girl comes forward from the audience and carefully unclasps the hook, when the lid of the box flies open with great force, and a tall Santa Claus figure, with flowing wig and beard, in a red fur-trimmed robe, springs up and makes a funny little speech, after which he bows low to the little girl, and hands her a present marked with her name. Then he disappears as mysteriously as he appeared, and the little girl fastens him down with the clasp.

This is repeated by one after another of the audience until the gifts have been all distributed, when the box is carried away again. If time does not serve for every child or person to open the wonderful box, after awhile a whole class or division may receive their presents from Santa Claus without his departure; but in small family parties it will be far more fun to let each child unclasp the

box for himself. Sometimes Santa Claus may seem unwilling to go down into his box, and some gentleman may find it needful to push him down very hard, and at the end of the performance, he may be so obstinate that the gentleman may find it necessary to push down the right hand only to see the left rise up very stiffly, then as he pushes down that, the right rises in turn, and finally having pushed all but the head down, he finds it so obdurate that he is compelled to take it off and pack it by the side of the figure before he can close the lid so as to carry off the box in the same way that he brought it in.

This very effective scene can be easily prepared, as the table is made of a frame only, on which the cloth is tacked, the front and sides being lined, so that they will not be transparent. This frame consists of four posts thirty inches high, with a strip of light wood three inches wide, and six feet long, nailed at the top and bottom of the posts, and with strips of the same width, and four feet in length at the sides. Across the top of these two other strips are nailed, two and one half feet apart, to hold the box. These upper strips are placed between the top strips so that the table-top will be level, and the cloth overlaps the edges of each; and cloth of the same color is drawn tightly over a little frame which fills the space when the box is not on the table.

This box is without a bottom, and is made of pine wood of the dimensions given above; that is, three feet by two, and six inches in height, with hinged cover and clasp. The operator, dressed in costume described, wears a wire mask, which can be bought at any toy shop. The wig of white flax is kept in place by a wire frame which rests on the shoulders, so it will keep its form when the real head is withdrawn, leaving the false one in the hands of the one who tries to push it into the box. A short set of steps enables Santa Claus to rise up quickly, raising the lid with his head. A very small boy should be also hidden under the table to pass up the presents to the operator.